

## **February Update From Your Dunsmore Ward Councillors**

Cllr Howard Roberts (WCC & RBC), Cllr Peter Eccleson (RBC), Cllr Deepah Roberts (RBC)

### **WCC**

- Formulation of the County budget has featured prominently this period. In line with many County Councils our available finances are tight and there is much cross party debate around the forthcoming budget allocations.
- Local Travel Plan (LTP) - WCC is in the process of updating the current LTP which is a document that sets out the transport needs, challenges, priorities and objectives for the county. The LTP sets policies to shape future transport schemes and developments within the County. It allows WCC to channel resources to deliver a transport network that gives people who live and work in Warwickshire access to the facilities they need to go about their daily lives. Public Consultation is open until 18<sup>th</sup> March and Parish Councils and other organisations plus members of the public are encouraged to take part. Details can be found on the WCC webpages with an online survey questionnaire:  
<https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/insights-service/ltp-themes/>
- Cllr.Roberts has also been involved with issues of flooding over the period. This includes areas of flooding in Dunchurch such as the junction of Northampton Lane and Cawston Lane.
- Issues around the tending of Highways hedgerows have also been prevalent. Attempts have been made to bring pressure to bear on the Developers who own the hedges to the roadside at the top end of Cawston Lane, from Lime Tree Village to the Coventry Road where residents have complained about the roadside hedges. Developers have been slow to respond to date. There have also been issues with land adjacent to the highways on the A45 with litter and discarded temporary roadworks signage. Contact has been made via County on the Highways England designated contractors.
- The parking scheme project at the top of Adkinson Avenue is still ongoing. Design modifications to accommodate additional trees has caused a slight delay before the design can go out to consultation with residents.
- Cllr.Roberts agrees with the Parish Council that a significant number of motorists travel through the village at a speed in excess of the legal speed limit. Discussions have taken place with WCC Road safety officers about a school crossing patrol ( lollypop person) to be re-established in the village.

### **RBC**

- RBC is also focussed on budget setting for the coming year. Council tax funds are finite therefore to maintain high quality services, our focus, is to generate additional revenue from commercial activities along with efficiency savings. In this year's

budget residents will benefit from prudent council leadership that maintained financial reserves in order to soften the financial Shock experienced by pandemics

- As previously stated, your Councillors are suggesting that the Parish Councils within Dunsmore Ward take a very similar view on the years' finances and ensure that they spend reserves prudently. Parish Councils if possible would be wise to maintain balances for future years in order to mitigate any future reduction in services.
- Increases in HGV traffic through Dunchurch is evident. This is possibly due to the construction works at Ashlawn Road. Discussions have been held on environmental grounds. Cllr. Roberts has also had feedback from County Highways regarding the timescales for the potential modifications to the Dun Cow crossroads. Designs should be approved within the next 3 weeks and WCC will thereafter invite tenderers for the work. Construction should commence late April/early May.
- Cllr. Roberts in a meeting with County Council highways discuss the poor road surface on the Rugby Rd, between Billton Grange School and the Village Hall, and the puddles that create real problems for pedestrians due to the inadequate drainage. WCC highways acknowledge the problem and will report back.
- RBC have had cross-party approval to increase the rents to our tenants within Rugby. The rent increase is approx. 1.5% per annum from April 1<sup>st</sup> which actually brings us back to rental levels of three years ago since we have had annual rent reductions of a similar amount over the past few years in line with Government policy. Consideration was given to the effects of this increase upon our tenants but many of those affected are on rent support via universal credit. The Council has a retained housing stock of c3,700 homes within the Borough currently available to let and manages an additional 60 leasehold properties with an annual rent roll of c.£16m. Rental arrears greater than 4 weeks amounted to £1.044m as at January 2021 and 49% of this total (£0.509m) relates to current tenants.
- Planning has featured prominently over the period, more especially planning enforcement. There was one particular case back in December which made the press pertaining to a Grade 2 listed building in Bourton where developers undertook work without planning permission. RBC won a Court case against the developer. There are also issues currently with a site of a former garage and trailer repair centre on the A45 used for refreshments which is the subject of an enforcement order. RBC is clamping down on unlawful planning matters and will take action as necessary.
- Fly Tipping continues to be a major and costly problem for RBC. Cllr. Roberts has formed a cross party working group to focus on the fly tipping / littering epidemic
- We are planning on improving litter collections in layby areas and are working on 'other initiatives' to catch the culprits. We had a successful prosecution against a Birmingham resident caught fly tipping in Coalpit Lane near Wolston recently. We urge residents to report any instances that they may witness.
- Flooding has been of concern and Cllr Eccleson in liaison with Cllr Roberts (with his WCC 'hat' on) have been investigating the Cawston Lane flooding previously

mentioned and sites along Rugby Rd where drainage appears poor (near Village Hall). Other villages in the ward which have similar issues include Princethorpe and Frankton.

- It has been reported and witnessed that traffic travelling into Dunchurch along the Rugby Rd seems to move toward the centre of the road near the entrance to Earl Gardens. This is possibly due to overhanging trees but is nonetheless a safety hazard and could cause a potential head-on collision. This is under investigation.
- Vaccine Scam – Police have made us aware that Nationally there have been reports of individuals targeting the elderly and administering fake vaccinations for a fee. Regionally/Nationally we are also seeing fake emails being sent to the vulnerable and elderly purporting to be the NHS and asking them to click on a link to obtain vaccines. They are then usually asked to provide a payment or bank details. We have been asked to make residents aware.
- Outside of this immediate area your Councillors have been involved in broad across our ward – Thurlaston, Draycote, Bourton, Stretton, Frankton, Princethorpe and Ryton - surrounding potential evictions, flooding, drug dealing, road/street improvements, fly tipping, planning, parking, refuse and landscape issues.
- Cllr. Deepah Roberts, in addition to her Deputy Mayor duties has been working with residents suffering domestic violence and Mental health issues that have increased during the lock down period.
- Due to the increase in emails received by your Ward Councillors we apologise if we have not responded as quickly as normal.
- Residents' are reminded they should include their full Postal address and telephone number when sending emails as this will facilitate a quicker response.
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8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021